

REMARKS**Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112**

Claims 28, 30, 31, and 33 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner contends that there is no support in the specification for the outer layer being formed at least in part of one of the listed compositions.

Applicants believe that the Examiner has misinterpreted claim 28 and have amended this claim for purposes of clarification. Specifically, claim 28 requires the outer component (not the outer layer) to be formed at least in part of one of the listed component. In the specification it is clear that the outer component may be multiple layers and some of these layers may be formed of one of the listed components, which supports the language of the claim. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-10, 12-16, and 31 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner contends that it is not clear whether the second ceramic material is different from the first ceramic material. However, the Examiner appears to have overlooked the express language of claim 1 calling for the second ceramic material to be different from the first ceramic material.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 27 is rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Aita et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,472,795). While applicant disagrees with

the Examiner's contention, this claim has been cancelled without prejudice to avoid unduly delaying the allowance of the remaining claims.

Claims 18 and 19 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Aita et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,472,795) in view of Davidson (U.S. Pat. No. 5,782,910). The Examiner indicated that applicant's arguments were not commensurate with the claims in that claim 18 did not make reference to a nanocrystalline structure. Claim 18 has been amended to reflect that the outer component is formed of a nanocrystalline compound. Applicant believes that the rejection has been overcome.

Response to Allowable Subject Matter

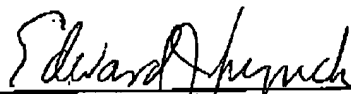
Applicant note with appreciation the indication that Claims 9 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. However, applicant believes that the amendments made to claim 1 place claim 1 in condition for allowance so there is no need to rewrite claims 9 and 10 as independent claims and to include all of the limitations of claim 1.

The allowance of claims 21-26 is likewise appreciated.

Applicant believes that the pending claims define patentable subject matter and respectfully request further consideration pursuant to the concurrently filed RCE. An

early allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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